



Florida House of Representatives

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Speaker-Designate Announces Hurricane Preparedness Workgroup

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Florida House Speaker-Designate Allan Bense (R-Panama City) today announced his intention to establish a workgroup of Florida House staff to analyze what, if any, legislative action is necessary as a result of Florida being impacted by two major Hurricanes within days of each other.

Speaker Bense also reaffirmed his commitment to work with Governor Bush, the Florida Cabinet and Senate President-Designate Tom Lee (R-Brandon).

Speaker-Designate Bense has asked Rep. Leslie Waters (R-St. Petersburg) to lead the workgroup, which will work to determine what improvements can be made to how Florida handles natural disasters and to develop potential legislation. As the group's work progresses, Speaker-Designate Bense will determine which House members will be appointed to a committee to address these issues.

"With Hurricanes Charley and Frances battering large swaths of Florida within days of each other, and Hurricane Ivan churning on the horizon, we've been reminded once again how vulnerable our state is to extreme weather events," said Speaker-Designate Bense. "While it appears that the laws put in place after Hurricane Andrew are allowing our emergency workers and related agencies to do their jobs, and do them well, we can always do better. We need to take a close look at what worked, what didn't work and what could have worked better to make sure we are fully prepared in the future.

"Governor Bush has done an excellent job managing Florida's financial and physical resources to address the needs of those affected by the one-two punch Florida has suffered. The cooperation among federal, state and local agencies has been impressive, and our volunteer organizations as well as our partners in the private sector have certainly stepped up to the plate.

"Rep. Waters has a deep understanding of the insurance issues involved. With her leadership, I'm confident we will improve the way Florida prepares for emergencies as well as how we react when they occur."

"These devastating storms have affected almost every family in our state in one way or another," said Rep. Waters. "I look forward to helping make sure Florida is ready if disaster strikes again."

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